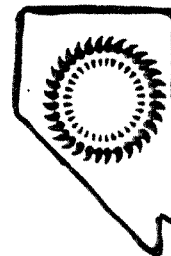


NEVADA CLIMATE SUMMARY



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FEBRUARY 1997
VOLUME 14, NUMBER 2

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STATE PUBLICATIONS

SYNOPSIS

After a very wet December and January a dry February was in the cards. Only a few scattered locations along the Eastern Slopes of the Sierra Nevada and in Central and Eastern Nevada had more than 1" of precipitation. Even that was well below normal in the West for this usually wet month. As has been the case this winter temperatures continued to be near or a little above normal except a little below normal in the Northeast.

After only 5 months Water Year 1996-97 has been wetter than normal in all but Clark County, ranging from 1 & 3/4 times normal along the East Slopes of the Sierra Nevada to about 115% in the extreme Northeast in Elko County. In between the Northwest and Eastern Nevada have had about 1 & 1/2 times normal 140%. Although Southern Nevada is experiencing a dry spell, upstream Colorado River areas are about 1 & 1/3 times the usual, ensuring ample water for the summer season.

TEMPERATURE

No large departures from normal temperatures were observed this February. Averages were a little above normal except a little below in the Northeast. Likewise, no extreme records were approached, as Wildhorse Reservoir dropped to -20°, with Gibbs Ranch and Deeth at -10°, Ely -9°, and Ruth -6°. On the warm side, locations around Lake Mead reached the mid 70's with low 80's on the Colorado River (e.g. Laughlin had 82°).

PRECIPITATION

Only a few locations had above normal precipitation this month, mostly in Central Nevada. For example, Eureka was 170% of normal (1.59"), Hawthorne 168% (.89") and Great Basin National Park 155% (1.44"). Great Basin NP (7800') also had 30" of snowfall. In the Sierra Nevada Incline had 1.45", only 1/3 of normal. Some other totals were Hay Creek, near Reno 1.43" and Aurora Mine 1.37". Really dry locations were Amargosa Valley, where none fell, Pahrump and Lovelock .04", Beatty and Las Vegas Spring Valley .05", and Smokey Valley .09".

EVAPORATION AND WIND (Note: Sunshine Records are no longer measured by the NWS)

In the few ice free pan locations, evaporation totals were a little above normal. Wind readings were near normal for February but gusts did reach 60-70mph in foothill areas on the East Slope of the Sierra Nevada.

NOTE: Only January is without a 90° reading in Nevada. The 87° recorded at Logandale in 1914 is the highest. On the cool side temperatures have not fallen below zero only in June, July and August. During June 1891 Belmont recorded 8°, with 16° in July 1995 at Charleston, and 10° in August at both Charleston and San Jacinto in August 1992.

NOTE 2: One of the greatest snowfalls in the Sierra Nevada. 7000' At Echo Summit near South Lake Tahoe from January 11 - February 29, 1969 377" fell, with 92" of that in 3 days - February 23-25. (and a 182" snowpack on the 25th). This occurred over the Washington Birthday Holiday, causing all kinds of travel problems.

10 years ago - March 1984

Several locations recorded the months highest temperature one day after the lowest. For example, Battle Mountain had a 10° low on the 30th and a 69° high on the 31st. Ely 10° to 65°, Denio 15° to 71°, Alamo 24° to 74°. Manhattan was the wettest location 4.63" and 33" of snowfall (3 to 4 times normal).

John W. James
State Climatologist

Bob Bransford has been a weather observer for the NWS for almost 20 years now near Shoshone, southeast of Ely, at the foot of the beautiful Snake Range in Spring Valley. He and his wife met while both were working for Safeway in Ely. Bob then worked for Kennecott Copper for 30 years. The Bransfords remember December 1990 as an outstanding weather event, when the mercury dropped to -25° . A native of Southern California, he and his wife have 11 grandchildren and 9 great grandchildren! Thanks very much Bob for being a great weather observer, and for making evaporation pan measurement for the State Climate Office for the past few years.

